

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 22 are pending in this application.

In response to June 24, 2008 Restriction Requirement and the November 3, 2008 Office Communication, applicant continues to elect, with traverse, for continued prosecution the Group III claims (claims 19 - 22) which are drawn to a method of deploying a plug.

The applicant also continues to respectfully submit that claims 1 – 16 and 18, i.e., Group I claims drawn to a plug assembly, can also be searched without undue burden by the Examiner. More specifically, the Group III claims and the Group I claims have a number of common limitations which should not create any additional searching time for the Examiner.

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) § 803 states that, "If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions."

The applicant notes that Group III and Group I claims represent alternative solutions to the same problems. The Group III claims cool the carrier and associated fins so as to cool molten material adjacent the fins before molten material between the fins. In this way, the cooled material acts to entrap the still molten material so that as the molten material cools and expands, it exerts a greater radial force to hold the plug in place than if the molten material was free to expand axially past the fins as well as radially. The invention in the Group I claims provides the improvement by employing means to obstruct the gaps between the fins and the passageway so as to again entrap

molten material between the fins so that the material is forced to expand only radially rather than being free axially and radially as it cools and solidifies. Thus, the Group I and Group III claims employ different approaches to solving the same problem in a similar way, i.e., preventing / limiting undesirable axial expansion of the molten material so as to encourage advantageous radial expansion to significantly increase the strength with which the plug is retained within the passageway.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-16 and 18 should be searched and examined along with claims 19 - 22 to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to the applicant and duplicative examination by the Patent Office. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that claims 1 – 16, 18 and 19 - 22 be prosecuted together in the same application.

Within the Group 1 claims, the applicant elects species A), which is directed to utilizing a ring for an obstruction means. Claims 2 – 7 read on this species. Further, in regard to the sub-species of species A), the applicant elects sub-species (2), which is having C-shaped rings. Claim 4 reads on this sub-species.

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Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned attorney if there are any questions in regard to this election. Thank you for your assistance.

An action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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